“The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,” Hiroshima survivor Setsuko Thurlow says, “is the beginning of the end of nuclear weapons.” On January 22, 2021, the Treaty will enter into force.

On that historic day, these words from Article 1 of the Treaty will gain the power of law: “Each State Party undertakes never, under any circumstances, to develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices...”

The second paragraph in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons provides a clear and direct explanation of the need and purpose of the treaty:

“Deeply concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from any use of nuclear
weapons, and recognizing the consequent need to completely eliminate such weapons, which remains the only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons are never used again under any circumstances…"

HOW WE GOT HERE

The road to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has been long, and progress has not been even or certain. It began with the very first resolution passed in the United Nations, in January of 1946, which sought “the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.”

As aspirational as those words may have been, they were no match for the determination of the United States and the Soviet Union to amass stockpiles of atomic and then nuclear weapons. In time, they were joined by France, the United Kingdom and China as nuclear powers.

Twenty-four years later, in 1970, the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons was adopted and entered into force. At its heart was an agreement between the nuclear powers and the rest of the world—those countries without nuclear weapons would forego developing them; those countries with nuclear weapons promised to pursue in good faith a cessation of the arms race and complete disarmament “at an early date.”

That didn’t happen. But some good things did happen. Vast parts of the world renounced nuclear weapons—The Treaty of Tlateloco declared Latin America to be a nuclear-free zone; Brazil and Argentina abandoned their nuclear weapons programs.

Other things happened, too. Israel, South Africa, India and Pakistan produced nuclear weapons. Eventually, after being declared part of the “axis of evil” by a US president, North Korea withdrew from the NPT and proceeded to build a small nuclear arsenal.

There was a brief period of hope, a breaking through of light, when, in response to the bellicose posture of President Ronald Reagan, the nuclear freeze movement swept the United States. In 1982, a million people marched in New York City to the United Nations demanding an end to the arms race. Faith communities issued statements challenging the assumption that nuclear weapons were here to stay, a “necessary evil.” The movement flared, was not without impact, but eventually dimmed.

ENTER ICAN

Then, in 2005, a discussion among several organizations in the Pacific, reflecting on the success of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, proposed an International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. The idea took hold in Australia, and organizing efforts began to expand. In April 2007, ICAN was formally launched as a global coalition in Austria.

The vision was to build a public groundswell for the abolition of nuclear weapons. The methodology was new—sidestepping the military, security and diplomatic arguments that had long framed public discussions, they would build their arguments around the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons.

It took ten years, and three international conferences, for the collaboration of civil society and non-nuclear nations to formalize the proposal that eventually became, in 2017, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. One hundred twenty-two nations voted for the Treaty at the UN in July of 2017—none of the nuclear weapons states and none of the nations cowering under their “nuclear umbrellas” participated in the negotiations or voted for the Treaty. They hoped to discredit the Treaty by ignoring it.

But the world had other ideas. In December 2017, ICAN accepted the Nobel Peace Prize for its work creating the Treaty.

From 2017 to October 24, 2020, the Treaty sat and waited. Eighty-four countries formally signed the Treaty. But it would not enter into force until fifty nations had ratified or acceded to the Treaty. Slowly, the numbers

GETTING TO A TREATY

1946: First UN resolution calls for “the elimination of atomic weapons
1962: Cuban missile crisis
1969: Treaty of Tlateloco declares Latin America “Nuclear Free zone”
1982: 1 million people march for abolition in New York City

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SPECIAL TREATY EDITION
rose. And then, at the end of October, Honduras became the fiftieth country to ratify the Treaty.

According to the terms of the Treaty, it enters into force 90 days after the 50th country deposited its ratification. January 22, 2021 became a day for the history books.

WHAT NOW?

Between now and January 22, people across the country and around the world are making plans for actions and events—individuals and groups—to mark the Treaty’s entry into force (EIF). It will be important that the world take note, especially the nuclear weapons states that would prefer to ignore the Treaty.

In the US, a collaboration is building, led by The Nuclear Resister, Nukewatch, the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability and OREPA, supported by ICAN and ReThink Media and a growing number of groups around the country. The easiest way to connect with the effort is to join the facebook group: Nuclear Ban Treaty EIF.

The first in a series of Zoom meetings was held on November 19—more than 40 groups participated, and we heard plans for banner hanging, plane flyovers, visits to Congressional offices, and other exciting ideas. At nuclear weapons production sites across the country and at nuclear military bases, banners will be hung that declare “NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE ILLEGAL.” You can download a template for the banner from OREPA’s web site (orepa.org) and get your own banner made.

There are other resources on the web site, too, and more being added as they are developed. You don’t have to live near a bomb plant to be part of the nationwide movement. Resources provided by ICAN will point you to financial institutions, corporations, universities and colleges that are engaged in producing nuclear weapons—January 22 is a great day to deliver a poster-sized copy of the Treaty to your nearest bomb supporter. You can find a pdf file for a 24x30 poster on the resource page at orepa.org. There are other resources that can be downloaded, and they have links to Don’t Bank on the Bomb and Schools of Mass Destruction. We are continually adding to that page.

Our next Zoom call will be December 17. If you want to join the meeting, send an email to nuclearbantreatyeif@gmx.com to get registration info.

AND AFTER JANUARY 22?

I’m glad you asked. January 22 is a major milestone—as ICAN’s Beatrice Fihn says, “There will only be one Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Ever. And it will only enter into force once. January 22, 2021.”

But making the power and promise of the Treaty real will take more hard work. Legally, the Treaty itself is in force only in those states that have signed or ratified it. But the Treaty has a moral force as well, and that force is a powerful lever that we can use to press our government to sign and ratify the Treaty.

We expect and hope that the next breakthrough will be when a NATO country signs the Treaty. Or when one of the five European countries that currently host US nuclear weapons (German, Italy, Belgium, Turkey and The Netherlands) demands that the weapons, now illegal, be removed from their soil. To that end, we are supporting efforts by our colleagues in Europe—and when the bombs come back to the US, they will support our effort to make the Treaty real here.

But we cannot wait for that day—we have to create it. We hope that the collaboration we build for January 22 will endure beyond that historic day, that organizations will continue to communicate and plan together, that we will expand our reach and mount campaigns that draw attention to the Treaty and the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons. We will force the issue.

And when the Tipping Point day comes, we will be the weight that tips the scales to usher in the Treaty in the United States.

During the UN Treaty negotiation sessions in March 2017, the US chair was empty. The US and other nuclear weapons states boycotted the proceedings with the intent of excusing themselves from the Treaty.
A PART FOR EVERYONE

If you can connect with a peace group—in your community, your place of worship, on your campus—you can encourage them to become part of this movement; not only to take stand on the right side of history, but to make history.

But if you are on your own, you can be part of the movement. A simple letter to the editor puts nuclear weapons and the Treaty before hundreds or thousands of people. A letter to your elected representatives lets them know their constituents care about this issue. You don’t have to be an expert—you just have to care. You can write to a bank president, or a corporate CEO, or the president of a nearby school that is engaged in nuclear weapons production, development, or deployment. And you can connect with others in the Facebook group: Nuclear Ban Treaty EIF.

Whatever you do, we are encouraging you to share it. To inspire others and to demonstrate the breadth and depth of our movement. You can file your report on the Facebook site.

As we get closer to January 22, we’ll have other tools. We expect that a map will be created where people can post their events/actions/plans and other people can find them. We expect an effort to coordinate media to amplify our efforts.

The limits of what we can do are the limits of our imaginations. And in the end, when future generations ask, “What did you do to rid the world of nuclear weapons?” we will smile and say, “Let me tell you about an exciting time…”

OREPA to mark Treaty’s Entry into Force at Y-12

The Y-12 Nuclear Weapons Complex in Oak Ridge is the only facility in the United States with the capacity to produce the thermonuclear core for US nuclear bombs and warheads—every “secondary” for every nuclear weapon, more than 80,000 over the years, has been manufactured at Y-12. Y-12 continues to manufacture these weapons components today as part of the Life Extension Program, refurbishing and upgrading the US nuclear stockpile one warhead at a time.

For years, OREPA has declared Y-12 to be in violation of US obligations under the Nonproliferation Treaty. Our position was validated when retired Attorney General Ramsey Clark came to Knoxville seven years ago to offer testimony in the Transform Now Plowshares case.

The judge questioned the man who was Attorney General when the US signed the Nonproliferation Treaty and Clark testified that, in his view, the production of nuclear weapons at Y-12 was unlawful.

Of course, the judge refused to allow Clark to testify before a jury in the case. But the truth of his assertion was not refuted by the government.

In 1996, when the World Court issued its opinion on the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, it deadlocked on the central question—whether nuclear weapons in all possible instances were illegal. The court opined that in almost every circumstance, the use of nuclear weapons would violate common humanitarian law, but it held out an exception for a country that faced an existential threat, noting there was no written law outlawing nuclear weapons.

The TPNW closes that gap. And while the United States will try to exempt itself from the Treaty’s requirements, its moral force will be asserted across the country on January 22.

In Oak Ridge, we will gather at 1:00pm that day at the main entrance to the Y-12 Nuclear Weapons Complex, the intersection of Scarboro and East Bear Creek Road. Masks will be required and social distancing will be strictly observed, but since we can spread out along the road, we believe we can accommodate anyone who wants to participate.

At 1:00 we will hang a banner on the fence at the entrance. The message will be simple: Nuclear Weapons are Illegal. The small print will include the specific prohibitions of the Treaty.

We do not expect to be there for a long time—we will make our statement, probably read a portion of the Treaty, document the event to be shared along with other actions at weapons sites and places across the country, and leave.

Join us at 1:00pm on Friday, January 22, 2021 as we deliver the message of the Treaty—Nuclear Weapons are Illegal.
WHAT YOU CAN DO ON JANUARY 22, 2021
TO CELEBRATE THE TREATY’S ENTRY INTO FORCE

Yes, celebrate—but be smart about it. Any celebration should include an action item that raises the profile of the Treaty in the US. The first goal is to make people aware of the Treaty. Goal #2 is to make sure they know that it is entering into force. And Goal #3 is to begin to use public awareness to pressure the government to recognize, sign, ratify and comply with the Treaty. If that sounds like a lot, it is, and it will take time. But it will never happen if we don’t make it happen.

Here are some options. Some you can do all by yourself, others work better with a small group (please take pandemic precautions!). Pick one or more of your favorites.

1. Everyone can learn about the Treaty, and you don’t have to wait until Jan 22. A quick google search will turn up resources. Some as brief as 90 seconds; others are deep-dive webinars. Need a brief intro? See the Fact Sheet on page 5.

2. Hang or hold a banner in a public space. Activists will be hanging banners at nuclear weapons sites and nuclear military bases across the country. We have a template on the OREPA web site that you can use to have a banner made (around $50 if you go on-line) that you can hang or hold at any federal building—your local post office, federal courthouse, congressperson’s office.

2b. Think a banner is a bit much? The OREPA web site also has a template for a poster size version of the Treaty that you can hold or deliver or post in the place of your choice.

3. Focus on the $$. Our friends in Europe have been successful in pushing investment funds and corporations to divest from nuclear weapons funding—the Treaty gives us even more leverage. You can find a list of the companies and banks that invest in nuclear weapons at Don’t Bank on the Bomb. You can hold a poster outside the local Bank of America or Wells Fargo branch office. If your credit card is issued by a nuke-bank, you can change cards or write to the issuer and ask them to get out of the illegal nuclear weapons business.

4. Check out your local university or college. There is a list of US educational institutions that are directly involved in supporting nuclear weapons production on the ICAN web site. Look for the report: Schools of Mass Destruction. Some of them even operate nuclear weapons sites! Your local school not on the list? With a little digging, you might find out where their endowment funds are invested—chances are there is a link to a nuclear weapons corporation or fund.

5. Write your congresspersons—Senators and Reps. Tell them you expect their name to be on the first bill introduced in the new Congress that addresses the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Tell them you’ll be watching. It is highly likely that Senator Ed Markey and Congressman Ted Lieu will introduce bills that include a call for the US to join the Treaty.

6. Write a letter to the editor. This is really important—it is a way to broaden your reach through the public media. Mention your congressional representatives by name so their staff will clip the letter and show it to their boss.

7. Share the news on social media—if you use instagram or facebook or if you tweet—you can share the ICAN pages and other news about the Entry Into Force.

8. Donate! You can write a check or give on-line. There are dozens of groups around the country that are dedicating themselves to long-haul work to make the promise of the Treaty a reality around the world and in the US. They rely on donations and public support to keep going. Even a small contribution counts.

9. Commit for the long haul. Find the group nearest and dearest to your heart and join so you can stay involved, track the progress of the Treaty, and learn about more things you can do to help make it a reality. Get on their mailing list, either on-line or on paper.

10. Report back! This is crucial—even if your action is a simple one. We gain strength from working together and knowing that people all over are taking action. And your effort, large or small, is amplified when it is shared. We hope to build a database of actions and we hope to demonstrate widespread support for the Treaty across the country. You can post your actions on facebook at the Nuclear Ban Treaty EIF group; we will publicize other sites as they become available.

11. Ask your local place of worship to ring its bell for peace on January 22.

12. Ask your local government to join the ICAN Cities appeal—present a copy of the Treaty and ask for a resolution calling on the US to join the Treaty.

13. Deliver copies of the treaty in person or send via mail to congressional representatives and other public officials, and business, financial and educational institutions with ties to nuclear weapons activities, with a warning of their complicity.

14. Watch for more ideas: You are encouraged to post your plans on the Nuclear Ban Treaty EIF facebook group, and to look at what others are planning to do.

Prepared by The Nuclear Resister, Nukewatch, the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance, and the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability.
FACT SHEET

TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

1. The Treaty was approved at the United Nations in July 2017 by 122 nations.

2. According to the terms of the Treaty, 50 nations had to ratify it (or accede to it) before it would enter into force. Entry into force would automatically happen 90 days after the 50th ratification was deposited at the UN.

3. As of November 30, 2020, 84 states have signed the treaty.

4. On October 24, 2020, Honduras became the 50th nation to deposit its ratification at the United Nations.

5. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will enter into force on January 22, 2021.

6. None of the nuclear weapons states (US, Russia, England, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan, North Korea) have signed the Treaty. Legally, the terms of the Treaty will not apply to them until they have signed the Treaty. None of the “umbrella states”—those countries protected by agreements with nuclear powers—have signed the Treaty.

7. The Treaty outlaws the development, manufacture, testing, possession, transfer, acquisition, stockpiling, use or threat of use, control or receipt, stationing or deployment of nuclear weapons.

8. The Entry Into Force of the Treaty will make nuclear weapons illegal under International Law.

9. The Entry Into Force will pressure umbrella nations, especially nations with US/NATO nuclear weapons deployed on their soil (Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands, Italy, Turkey) and nations that permit nuclear weapons in their ports, controlled waters, or on US bases on their soil, to reconsider their responsibilities under the Treaty.

10. Five of the nuclear weapons states (US, England, France, China, Russia) have been obligated under the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (since 1970) to pursue disarmament “in good faith” “at an early date.” The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is an expression of the impatience of non-nuclear states with the failure of NPT states to meet their obligation to disarm.

11. According to Article 6 of the US Constitution, international treaties to which the US is a signatory are the “Supreme Law of the Land” and supersede state laws.

12. With the Entry Into Force of the TPNW, Nuclear Weapons will now be in the same category as land mines, cluster munitions, chemical and biological weapons, and poison gas.

13. As of September 2020, the nuclear weapons states possess 13,400 nuclear weapons. The breakdown* is as follows—

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Deployed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>4,310</td>
<td>(1,572)</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>3,800</td>
<td>(1,750)</td>
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<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>320</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Korea</td>
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*Hans Kristensen, Matt Korda
Federation of American Scientists

prepared by the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance, Nukewatch and The Nuclear Resister. Visit our facebook page: Nuclear Ban Treaty EIF